

A background image showing a group of graduates in caps and gowns, with a focus on two students in the foreground. The student on the left is wearing a grey cap and gown, while the student on the right is wearing a maroon cap and gown. They are both smiling. The background is slightly blurred, showing other graduates and a building.

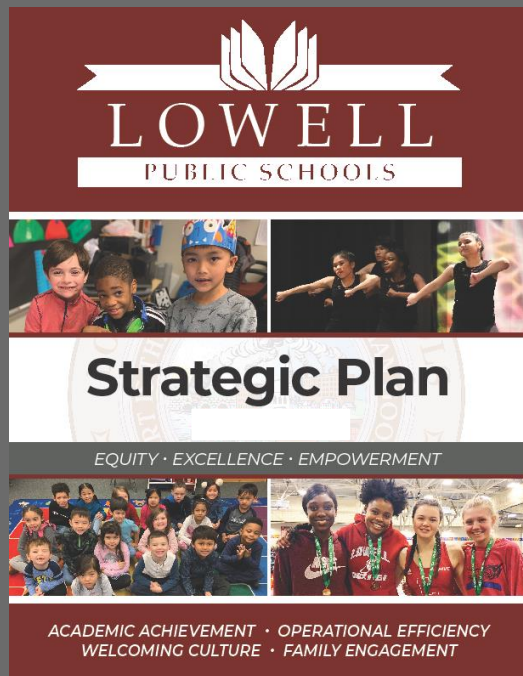
Lowell Public Schools

SY2020-2021 Strategic Goals Equity. Excellence. Empowerment.

Superintendent Joel D. Boyd, Ed.D.

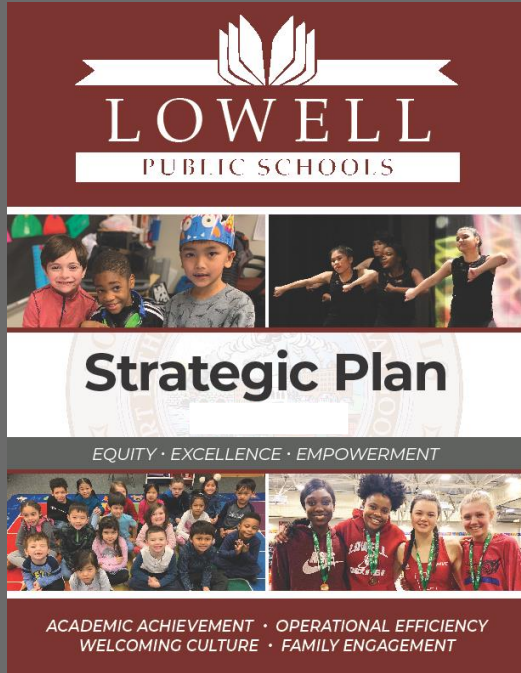


Our Core Beliefs



- **A high quality education is a fundamental civil right of every child we serve.**
- **Teaching and Learning are at the core of our work.** Everything we do must support what happens in the classroom.
- **Parents are our partners.** They are our students' first teachers in the home.
- **There is no silver bullet to improving our schools.** Sustainable school improvement requires hard and steady work over time.
- **Every adult in the system is accountable for the success of our students.** Putting every child on a path to college and career success is the responsibility of the entire community.

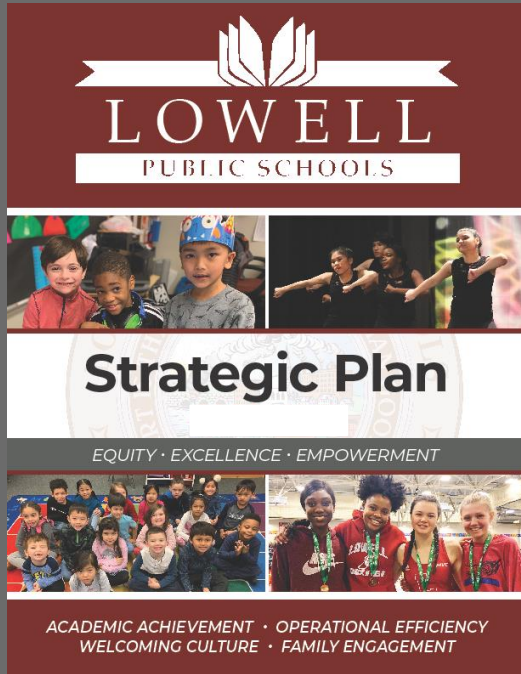
Our Fundamental Commitments to Equity



- Eliminate the racial, ethnic and linguistic achievement and opportunity gaps among all students
- Provide equitable funding and resources among the district's diverse schools
- Engage all families with courtesy, dignity, respect and cultural understanding

Our Theory of Action

Creating a pathway from the cradle to career success for every child



If we:

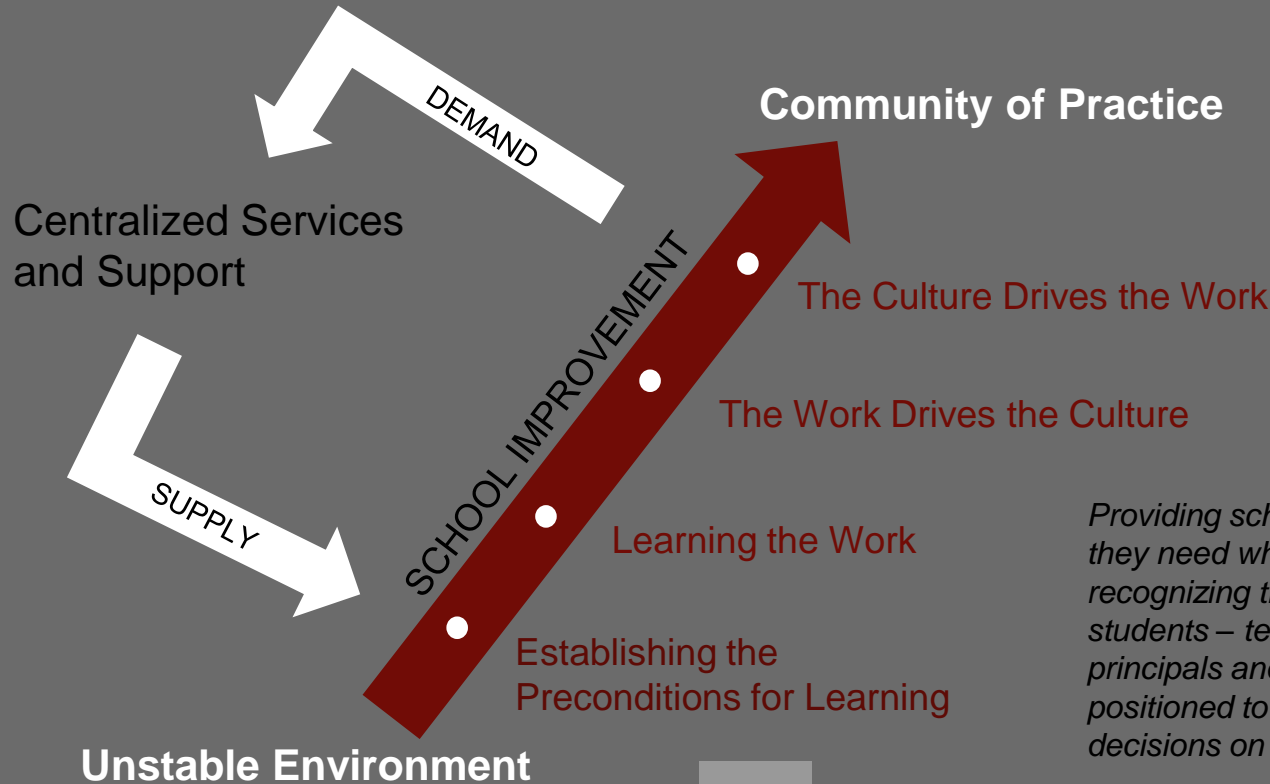
- Expand early learning opportunities from birth to age 5, through a coordination of services with community partners, ensuring that every child in Lowell is academically, emotionally and socially ready for kindergarten on Day 1;
- Increase access for all students to high performing seats through the continuous improvement of all schools, including an expansion of high demand programs and an intensive focus on turning around historically underperforming schools;
- Align the curriculum and secondary school programs with the expectations of colleges and the requirements of the future workforce; and
- Leverage the richness of Lowell's diversity by focusing all of our work on our fundamental commitment to equity,

Then:

- We can truly deliver on the inherent promise we make to each family who enrolls in our public schools by providing a high quality education to every child, and
- Ensure that all students – regardless of race, ethnicity, linguistic background or family income – graduate from high school ready to enter the college or career of his or her choice.

Translating Theory to Practice

A System-wide Model of Differentiated Autonomy



Providing schools with the support they need when they need it while recognizing that the people closest to students – teachers, parents, principals and support staff – are best positioned to make school-based decisions on behalf of our students

Physical Health

LPS facilities will undergo robust disinfectant sanitation and other enhanced cleaning tactics. Strict hygiene requirements will be imposed at all grade levels. Logistical modifications will be made to account for any physical distancing strategies advised by public health officials.

Mental Wellness

LPS will prioritize trauma informed practices in anticipation of students' mental health challenges precipitated by or exacerbated by the crisis. School leaders will be advised on practices to support both staff and families experiencing anxiety related to the crisis. SEL support systems will continue to be emphasized for the purpose of ensuring students' educational needs continue to be met in the wake of the 2020 closure and amid ongoing uncertainty.

Fiscal Prudence

LPS will conduct itself with heightened cautiousness due to revenue uncertainties at both the state and municipal level. All investments will be scrutinized for implications regarding long-term goals and any basis for immediate urgency.

Maintaining Flexibility

LPS will employ strategies to maintain programmatic and organizational flexibility both to meet the needs of students in the wake of the 2020 closures and to ensure maximum adaptability to logistical challenges and/or additional disruptions during the 2020 - 2021 school year.

SY2020-2021 Strategic Goals

1. Improve academics and student achievement at every school site.
2. Improve operational efficiency across the system.
3. Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family, every day.
4. Increase community engagement and empower families as partners in the educational process.

Goal 1: Improve academics and student achievement at every school site

SY2019-2020 Benchmarks and Progress

- Implemented the district's first comprehensive approach to turning around seven chronically underperforming schools through a model of targeted, on-site support and progress monitoring (*Renaissance Network*)
- Launched the District's first ever Early College in partnership with Middlesex Community College and Project Learn, enabling Lowell High School students to earn a full year of college credits prior to graduation (*Lowell Early College*)
- Achieved important progress in student engagement, from September to March prior to the closure when compared to the same time period of the prior year, with districtwide increases in average daily attendance (93% to 95%) and reductions in student suspensions (3,636 to 2,237)
- Completely redesigned districtwide academic programming within days of the statewide stay-at-home orders to include a combination of online, virtual learning, and teacher-directed remote learning based on centrally-designed, grade-appropriate weekly work packets
- Distributed over 5,000 mobile devices to families in need in the spring and established drive through "tech tents" to provide outdoor, COVID compliant tech support to families through the duration of state-required remote learning
- Readied the district for the likelihood of continued districtwide remote learning by improving the ratio of mobile devices to students from 1:3 in SY19/20 to 1:1 in SY20/21

Goal 1: Improve academics and student achievement at every school site

SY2020-2021 Actions and Deliverables

- **School Quality Improvement Plans**

Implement phase 2 of the *School Quality Improvement Planning* process that was initiated in March, including a protocol for an internal needs assessment at each school site and alignment of site-based instructional priorities for SY21/22 with FY22 school-based budgets

- **Targeted Support for Chronically Underperforming Schools**

Implement focused coaching and increased centralized support for schools within the District's *Renaissance Network* through a professional learning community model, including the development and implementation of a virtual instructional rounds protocol to monitor, support and improve teaching and learning in the COVID-19 remote environment

- **Digital Learning Plan**

Develop a multi-year digital learning plan to leverage and enhance the 1:1 mobile device infrastructure necessitated by COVID to create meaningful 21st century classrooms at each school beyond the current remote environment

- **Secondary School Reform**

Initiate a multi-year plan to align secondary school programming with post-secondary opportunities in conjunction with the development of the community-based *Portrait of a Graduate*, including a redesign of the comprehensive secondary program, new alternative programs and additional city-wide magnet options

Goal 2: Improve operational efficiency across the system

SY2019-2020 Benchmarks and Progress

- Reorganized the district's central administration to more optimally align the District's centralized service delivery model with the support needs of schools and families, and appointed the most diverse executive leadership team in recent district history
- Overhauled the school budgeting process to increase equity and transparency in resource allocation through a *Fair Student Funding* model, a first-of-its-kind redesign for Lowell based on nationwide best practices
- Improved overall staff recruitment and districtwide hiring practices through a concerted effort to identify and eliminate race-based employment barriers, resulting in 63% of all central office hires in FY20 identifying as people of color
- Launched a locally-based, teacher recruitment and retention program to increase the number of teachers of color in district schools and cultivate leadership opportunities for current diverse teaching staff (*Diversifying Teacher Leaders Initiative*)
- Initiated a scenario-based budgeting process that enabled the District to navigate the uncertainty of the state's economic environment, including an unprecedented requirement to plan for month-to-month budgets and the need to account for significant increased costs facing the District, while still maintaining a \$2 million increase in school-based budgets for the next fiscal year

Goal 2: Improve operational efficiency across the system

SY2020-2021 Actions and Deliverables

- **Data-Driven Decision-Making**

Establish Key Performance Indicators to monitor and track progress in each goal area of the District's strategic plan; Develop school-level performance scorecards to monitor progress and target support for school improvement; Develop and implement, semi-annual community satisfaction surveys as part of the systemic quality review process

- **Diversity Recruitment and Hiring**

Increase the pool of diverse applicants to the District through the implementation of the *Diversifying Teacher Leaders* program, the locally-based, teacher recruitment and retention program which was launched in SY19/20 to increase the number of teachers of color in district schools and cultivate leadership opportunities for current diverse teaching staff

- **Fair Student Funding**

Implement phase 2 of the school-based funding migration from a personnel-based system to student-based to further increase equity and transparency in district-wide budgeting and school-based resource allocations, including increased capacity building within the district's finance office on the underlying algorithms to reduce reliance on external, 3rd party support

- **Transportation System Redesign**

Conduct a comprehensive analysis of available options for improving general education bus services, including an implementation timeline which is consistent with relevant SC policies and prevailing contractual provisions.

Goal 3: Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family, every day.

SY2019-2020 Benchmarks and Progress

- Improved security and emergency preparedness of each facility through an internally-developed district-wide school safety audit protocol
- Established a new position of Social-Emotional Learning Coordinator to prioritize addressing the social emotional needs of students with an explicit focus on developing and implementing an SEL curriculum and training district-wide
- Established a team of centralized, bilingual family liaisons, with representation from each of the District's high frequency language populations and developed a language access plan which included an expansion of the language line and translation and interpretation services
- Completely redesigned cafeteria services around grab-and-go meal sites to ensure food security for the District's vulnerable populations during the statewide shutdown, serving over 500,000 meals to families in need during just the first three months of school closure

Goal 3: Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family, every day.

SY2020-2021 Actions and Deliverables

- **Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices**

Develop a multi-year, cross disciplinary culturally and linguistically responsive implementation plan which includes common definitions, standards, benchmarks and training schedule for students, staff and families

- **Social Emotional Learning**

Develop and Implement a comprehensive SEL curriculum and relevant professional learning across the district, including implementation of a needs assessment tool in grades K-12, the Second Step online curriculum within all middle schools, and the Open Circle curriculum in elementary schools with no existing SEL curriculum

- **Facility Safety Audits**

Implement proactive security readiness protocols at every school, including semi-annual, collaborative audits of each building; Monitor and refine the structure and conditions of all interior spaces according to DESE COVID-19 guidance and SC adopted protocols for each phase of re-opening

- **School Assignment Policy Analysis**

Conduct a comprehensive analysis of current school demographics and the impact that neighborhood school assignment would have on racial, gender and socioeconomic balance within schools and its implications for funding

Goal 4: Increase community engagement and empower families as partners in the educational process

SY2019-2020 Benchmarks and Progress

- Developed an overarching, community-based 5-year strategic plan with input that was accumulated through hundreds of stakeholder meetings, including nearly 60 listening sessions with staff, over 40 gatherings with external partners and community representatives, and 100 school visits in the first 100 school days
- Implemented the District's first ever School Site Council summit with over 100 participants
- Increased parental involvement in school-based budgeting with more families than ever before participating in the spring budget process
- Expanded the District's social media presence to increase access to district information for families and community partners across the city, increasing the frequency of new posts to the district's accounts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter from less than 10 per month to more than 50 per month and increasing the number of total followers across platforms by 43% from SY18/19 to SY19/20
- Launched a community-led process to develop a co-created vision for how LPS can develop the skills, mindsets and competencies of students through their educational experience based on the community's expectations, hopes, dreams and definition of "success" for students (*Portrait of a Graduate*)
- Implemented a new online registration process to facilitate the enrollment of over 2,000 new students to the district during MA's stay-at-home orders in the spring

Goal 4: Increase community engagement and empower families as partners in the educational process

SY2020-2021 Actions and Deliverables

- **Communication and Outreach to Families of Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds**

Develop and implement measurement tools which capture baseline data on the outcomes of the family engagement and language access plans on family satisfaction

- **Site-Based Budgeting**

Implement phase 2 of site-based budgeting, including an expanded timeline for collaboration with school-site councils and greater alignment with site-based *Quality Improvement Plans*

- **Portrait of a Graduate**

Develop and publish a community-vetted vision for Lowell graduates, including a framework of the knowledge, skills and competencies that will be attained through a K-12 Lowell Public Schools education based on the collaborative input and recommendations of students, staff and community partners

- **Lowell Student Advisory Council**

Establish a student advisory council to elevate student voices in district-level decision-making; Implement training for all student members and coordinate monthly meetings related to district-level initiatives

Core Beliefs

- A high-quality education is a fundamental civil right of every child.
- Teaching and Learning is at the core of our work.
- Parents are our partners.
- Sustainable school improvement requires hard and steady work over time.
- Every adult in the system is accountable for the success of all students; the entire community is responsible for their success.

Fundamental Commitments

- Eliminate the racial, ethnic and linguistic achievement and opportunity gaps among all students.
- Provide equitable funding and resources among the district's diverse schools.
- Engage all families with courtesy, dignity, respect and cultural understanding.

Strategy

- Employing differentiated levels of autonomy.
- Implementing systemic and instructional alignment.
- Empowering students and families through choice.
- Ensuring reciprocal accountability by all stakeholders.

Strategic Priorities

- Increasing access to early learning opportunities.
- Increasing access to high-performing seats.
- Aligning secondary programming with post-secondary opportunities.
- Leveraging the rich diversity of the Lowell community to serve the interests of LPS students.

SY2020-2021 STRATEGIC GOALS, ACTIONS AND DELIVERABLES

GOAL 1: Improve academics and student achievement at every school site	GOAL 2: Improve operational efficiency across the system	GOAL 3: Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family, every day	GOAL 4: Increase community engagement and empower families as partners in the educational process
School Quality Improvement Plans Implement phase 2 of the School Quality Improvement Planning process that was initiated in March, including a protocol for an internal needs assessment at each school site and alignment of instructional priorities for SY21/22 with FY22 school-based budgets.	Data-Driven Decision-Making Establish Key Performance Indicators to monitor and track progress in each goal area of the District's strategic plan; Develop school-level performance scorecards to monitor progress and target support for school improvement; Develop and implement, semi-annual community satisfaction surveys as part of the systemic quality review process	Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices Develop a multi-year, cross disciplinary culturally and linguistically responsive implementation plan which includes common definitions, standards, benchmarks and training schedule for students, staff and families.	Communication and Outreach to Families of Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds Develop and implement measurement tools which capture baseline data on the outcomes of the family engagement and language access plans on family satisfaction.
Targeted Support for Chronically Underperforming Schools Implement focused coaching and increased centralized support for schools within the District's <i>Renaissance Network</i> through a professional learning community model, including the development and implementation of a virtual instructional rounds protocol to monitor, support and improve teaching and learning in the COVID-19 remote environment.	Diversity Recruitment and Hiring Increase the pool of diverse applicants to the Lowell Public Schools through the implementation of the <i>Diversifying Teacher Leaders</i> program, the locally-based, teacher recruitment and retention program which was developed in SY19/20 to increase the number of teachers of color in district schools and cultivate leadership opportunities for current diverse teaching staff	Social Emotional Learning Develop and Implement a comprehensive SEL curriculum and relevant professional learning across the district, including implementation of a needs assessment tool in grades K-12, the Second Step online curriculum within all middle schools, and the Open Circle curriculum in elementary schools with no existing SEL curriculum	Site-based Budgeting Implement phase 2 of site-based budgeting, including an expanded timeline for collaboration with school-site councils and greater alignment with site-based <i>Quality Improvement Plans</i>
Digital Learning Plan Develop a multi-year digital learning plan to leverage and enhance the 1:1 mobile device infrastructure necessitated by COVID to create meaningful 21 st century classrooms at each school beyond the current remote environment.	Fair Student Funding Implement phase 2 of the school-based funding migration from a personnel-based system to student-based to further increase equity and transparency in district-wide budgeting and school-based resource allocations, including increased capacity building within the district's finance office on the underlying algorithms to reduce reliance on external, 3 rd party support	Facility Safety Audits Implement proactive security readiness protocols at every school, including semi-annual, collaborative audits of each building; Monitor and refine the structure and conditions of all interior spaces according to DESE COVID-19 guidance and SC adopted protocols for each phase of re-opening	Portrait of a Graduate Develop and publish a community-vetted vision for Lowell graduates, including a framework of the knowledge, skills and competencies that will be attained through a K-12 Lowell Public Schools education based on the collaborative input and recommendations of students, staff and community partners
Secondary School Reform Initiate a multi-year plan to align secondary school programming with post-secondary opportunities in conjunction with the development of the community-based <i>Portrait of a Graduate</i> , including a redesign of the comprehensive secondary program, new alternative programs and additional city-wide magnet options.	Transportation System Redesign Conduct a comprehensive analysis of available options for improving general education bus services, including an implementation timeline which is consistent with relevant SC policies and prevailing contractual provisions.	School Assignment Policy Analysis Conduct a comprehensive analysis of current school demographics and the impact that neighborhood school assignment would have on racial, gender and socioeconomic balance within schools and its implications for funding.	Lowell Student Advisory Council Establish a student advisory council to elevate student voices in district-level decision-making; Implement training for all student members and coordinate monthly meetings related to district-level initiatives